

Fares on Groton and Stonington Road

Hearing at Hartford Regarding Reduction on East End of Line—Officials Give Explanations and Petitioners Set Forth Desires.

(Special to The Bulletin.)

Hartford, March 25.—The people of Pawcatuck and Westerly brought their contention that there should be established a five cent fare between Pawcatuck and Stonington to the legislature this afternoon, and the committee on railroads spent the whole afternoon finding out why, from the standpoint of those interested, the ten cent fare which prevails should be cut in half. Representative Broughton of Stonington, who was elected on the five cent fare issue, conducted the case for the Pawcatuck people, and his colleague, Representative Martin, did what he could to help, though he freely said that the matter should never have come here, but should have been settled at settlement between the committee of citizens appointed for that purpose and the directors of the Groton and Stonington road.

Secretary Noyes Speaks.

Charles D. Noyes of Norwich, secretary of the company, made it plain that the fact that it had not been settled in no wise the fault of the directors of the trolley line, who had found it impossible to get together to consider the matter with the committee for the third time, after they had supposed it settled by a round trip of 15 cents being established, and would not be able to do this until their next meeting. Congressman Higgins is in Washington and other directors are out of the state elsewhere. Mr. Noyes suggested that it might be considered a breach of faith for the citizens to bring the Broughton resolution to the legislature at all, while the matter was in statu quo between them and the directors, as they seemed to consider it.

The position of the citizens was that they were paying ten cents for what they claimed to be five miles between Pawcatuck and Stonington—and the Groton and Stonington superintendent, Riley, stated was 3.2-4 miles, while there were other people on the line of the road who could ride longer distances than that for five cents. The position of the company, as expressed by Supt. Thomas W. Riley, Secretary Noyes, President Hamilton, and Attorney Charles W. Comstock, who appeared for the road, seemed to be that the majority of the people of Stonington didn't want this change, the Pawcatuck people cared little about it, but those in the village who worked in Stonington were anxious for it, and the Westerly merchants were behind the movement because they figured that they would get the trade from Stonington and Mystic which is now going to New London, and has been done so. It was suggested privately that Thomas W. Peabody of Westerly, who was present at the hearing and took some part, was really the man behind the whole movement.

Supporters of Reduced Fare.

There was a large number of supporters of the reduced fare in attendance on the hearing, and a number addressed the committee. Perhaps the more prominent of these were W. E. Wheeler of Stonington, Carl Koelsch of the American Velvet company, B. F. Cutler of the Atwood Machine company and Archie C. Thompson of Pawcatuck. In addition to the two representatives from the town, Mr. Peabody had little to say; he doesn't live in Connecticut, but chimed in with a question now and then. It developed that while the fare is ten cents and there is a round trip fare of one and a half times that sum, the company sells books of tickets containing 50 tickets, good for a five cent fare each, for \$2, and a school children's book of tickets for half that price. These tickets used to be good only between certain hours of the day and non-transferable, but both of those restrictions have been removed, but they are not good on Sundays now. The objection raised to these lay in the inability of the working people to pay for such tickets in advance, and cases were cited where workmen paid five cent fares every day because they couldn't afford to put out \$2 in advance to secure the cheaper rate. The New York, New Haven and Hartford road charges a fare of 10 cents each way on its steam line since the two-cent-a-mile fare went into force, but before that used to charge 14 cents each way. A three months' round trip ticket, one however, be purchased during the time of the old fare rate for \$3.65, making a round trip cost a bit over 10 cents.

Mr. Koelsch made a special plea for the working people. "They can't afford

to buy these books," he said. "We have about 250 employees at the present time and 50 of them live in Pawcatuck. We can't get help enough in Stonington. We manufacturers must look to the Westerly end of the line for help; we can't get it at the Mystic end. The reason for this is largely the fact that if you take Groton out of Mystic there is mighty little left. "And think of the wives and children of these workmen, gentlemen," urged Mr. Koelsch. "They need the recreation of a ride in the open air of an afternoon, and the children need the ability to get to and from school at a rate such that working people can afford to pay it. A director of the road has told me that the working people, at least—and it is for them we are here to plead—should have a five cent fare and he would see to it that they got it."

Spoke for Workmen.

Mr. Cutler also, who said that on the payroll of his concern were 62 men who came daily to work from Pawcatuck and used this line, was very anxious to have this change made, to benefit the workmen. He forcefully asserted that the manufacturers of the town of Stonington had to go to Pawcatuck for their employees in very many cases, and showed that these employees were obliged to pay ten cents for the ride of five miles, while the people of West Mystic could come to Stonington, a distance of 4-1-4 miles, for five cents. He mentioned the case of two of his employees, one of whom lived in either place. The Pawcatuck man gets home first, but pays twice as much to do it as the West Mystic man. The situation," said Mr. Cutler, "is like that of trying to put six horses into five stalls, and we've got the stall with two horses in it."

Representative Martin put in a petition signed by over 500 people in petition of the statement that this agitation was at the instance of Westerly merchants, and stated that there had been filed with the directors of the road another petition signed by more than 1,400 people.

Supt. Riley Heard.

Supt. Riley sustained the brunt of the company's testimony, and explained the system of lapover fares in force. He put in a large map of the territory and explained to the committee just how the matter was arranged. Messrs. Broughton and Wheeler representing the supporters of the measure in going over this subject. Mr. Riley stated that the people of Mystic paid a five cent fare to Noank, a distance of but 2-4-5 miles, and there never had been a complaint over this. He detailed the experience of the P. H. Ople company of Westerly, which had twice chartered the road for a certain day to bring people from West Mystic to Westerly, where is ordinarily collected a 20 cent fare, for five cents, and the registration on the second occasion, when the matter had been well advertised, only totaled 229, as against a normal registration between these points of about 4,500, showing that the people weren't so enthusiastic over reduced fare as was said.

Letters from Railway Managers. He read a number of letters from street railway managers, among them being General Superintendent E. P. Shaw, Jr., who used to manage the New York trolley system and is now running the Worcester and Boston line, which Mr. Riley characterized as the finest interurban system in New England. These letters showed that a fare of 1-1-2 cents for a distance of 5-3-4 miles, less than 1-1-2 cents a mile, is not as high as the average fares on trolley roads in southern New England. The ten cent fare zone on the different roads represented in the letters varied from two to eleven miles. As to the ten cent fare keeping people off the cars, Mr. Riley showed that the total registration on the whole line during the first week in this month was 28,725, and 7,562 was the registration in this distance between Pawcatuck and Stonington. As to the paying traffic, however, that was on the other end of the line. The distance between Mystic and New London was but 9-1-2 miles, as against 10-1-2 for the rest of the line, but this portion pays 54 per cent of the income and always has averaged about that. He quoted fares on other trolley lines in that vicinity, but it was stated that these lines crossed town lines in every case.

Mr. Cutler wanted to know why the books of tickets were no longer sold by conductors, and Mr. Riley replied that this was to remove temptation from the conductors, who might readily have turned in \$2 for a book and collected \$4 in cash fares, for which they would turn in the tickets in the book. Mr. Noyes remarked to the committee that this whole agitation could

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Blanchard and P. G. Darling, Bridgeport, cap for valves; W. G. Church, Hartford, dental plugger; R. E. Crose, Winsted, frictional chain hoist; C. Cuto, Meriden, terminal connector; E. Egge, Bridgeport, device for shaving soap; E. C. Goodwin, New Britain, lock and latch; E. S. Knicker, Bridgeport, inclosed fuse; C. J. Lake, Bridgeport, locomotion for vessels, vehicles or other moving bodies; T. R. Lashar, Bridgeport, attaching steel

blades to solid white metal handles; S. J. Miller, M. Morlock and P. G. Carleton, Danbury, collar ironing, dampening, folding and shaping machine; W. E. Shanley, Norwich, finders for cameras; J. Surprice, New Haven, clothes drier; H. P. Townsend, New Britain, grooving machine. Design—M. C. Bronson, Rockville, sweater.

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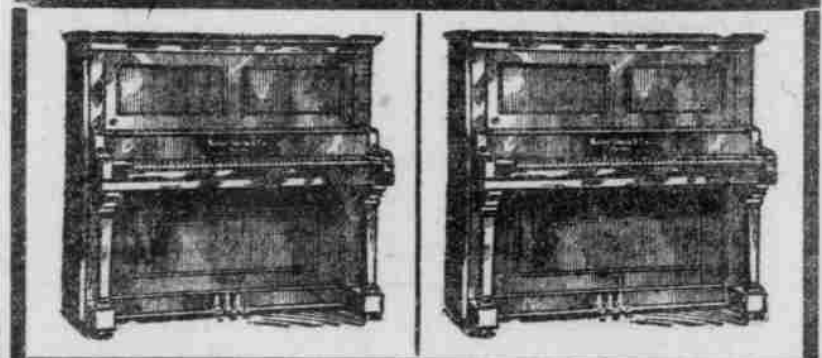
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